

an investigation before adoption papers are actually filed, the petition for adoption. Now as a matter of fact, the children placed through adoption agencies will have this kind of study already conducted on them. It's only in those instances where children are placed by other than adoption agency methods where it will be necessary in most cases to have such a home study conducted and then the judge has the option of choosing an adoption agency which has been the traditional route or the public Welfare Agency, the State Public Welfare Agency. The latter is not likely to happen often. A point was also raised during the hearing that the adoption agency's personnel are located exclusively in Omaha and Lincoln. Well as a matter of fact, the adoption agencies are headquartered there but they do have personnel throughout the state. I have had only one complaint to me regarding the bill from any individual's writing from across the state. Two judges indicated to me the additional burden on the courts. They suggested, for instance, that we permit the adoption and the waiver of the home study, those cases where the people adopting were blood relatives of the child. I know there is a possibility for child abuse on the part of grandparents. That is possible. It's not as likely I would say based on the statistics that we do have. Someone also suggested that step parents be permitted to be included, but as a matter of fact, we can show there is a high incidence relatively speaking, for child abuse on the part of some step parents. So it would seem that the investigation ought to be conducted in those particular cases. I would like to emphasize that the court makes the determination on how the cost of such home study should be conducted if in fact, it is conducted, and finally to repeat for the third time, the home studies that would be required are already conducted. In fact they're conducted in an exhaustive factor, in an exhaustive manner. I, personally can attest to that, for those children that are placed through an adoption agency. The amendment that we're now speaking to would permit the judge to waive this report when the adoption would be taken by blood relatives. I move for the adoption, first of all of the amendment.

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I'd like to ask a question of Senator Bereuter, please. Senator Bereuter, in Lancaster County, Douglas County, are these investigations being conducted presently? Or do you know?

SENATOR BEREUTER: Senator Schmit, in Lancaster County, it's my understanding that they are conducted routinely.

SENATOR SCHMIT: What about Douglas County?

SENATOR BEREUTER: Douglas County conducts them only part of the time.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Who makes the decision as to whether or not they are conducted in Douglas County?

SENATOR BEREUTER: The judge will make the decision as he is permitted to do under the law at this time. In some cases smaller counties conduct them only occasionally.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Isn't it possible that under the present system that a judge can require the investigation any time that he feels that it is necessary?